



Taking an oath sets apart a rare, special tradition

By Col. Steven Corbett
Warrior Forge Commander

"I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion..."

One of the greatest joys in my job as the Warrior Forge Commander is administering the Oath of Office to commissionees at the Graduation Ceremonies. This summer, we will commission nearly 175 second lieutenants at Warrior Forge.

Many of these officers are attending LDAC for the second time. They returned home during their first endeavor, due to medical issues, injuries incurred during training, or due to difficulty in completing their training successfully.

Warrior Forge is hard. It needs to be, because as officers we are entrusted with the lives of the sons and daughters of America. There is no shame in leaving one year and coming back the next to become successful. In fact, these cadets/lieutenants have truly lived the Warrior Ethos – they Did Not Quit and they Did Not Accept Defeat. They overcame their challenges and returned to Fort Lewis in order to realize their dream of becoming a commissioned officer.



Corbett

I deeply appreciate the efforts of our families who travel thousands of miles to participate in the commissioning ceremonies at Fort Lewis. I always ask the commissionees in every regiment which family is winning the "farthest distance traveled" award. For the 1st Regiment's commissioning, there were family members from Puerto Rico, New York and even Japan, who traveled here in order to make a lieutenant's "special day" even more special.

Americans take very few oaths in their lives. There are very, very few things we do as Americans in which we publicly "swear to God" that we will fulfill our obligations. Marriage, citizenship, and enlistment into the Armed Forces are some of the very few events which are sealed by swearing, upon our honor, that we will fulfill our duties.

The oath of office taken as a commissioned officer is a special one. It does not make us superior to our Soldiers – it is the ultimate act of *subordination*. We are, in effect swearing to place our Nation, our Mission and our Soldiers above ourselves, at all times. It is my honor – my deep, personal honor – to administer this oath to the young men and women who successfully complete their mission and become a second lieutenant in America's Army.

I love my job.

Warrior Forge reinforcing the most basic Warrior Tasks

By Command Sergeant Major Victor Mercado
Western Region Command Sergeant Major

Our Army is not for leaders who think of field training as a necessary evil they must endure only for the length of an exercise; nor is it for leaders who see themselves merely as "support Soldiers," instead of Warriors with additional specialties.

Cadet Command identifies every cadet as a warfighter first. Warrior Forge leaders are doing an awesome job in ensuring that every cadet is trained to win their piece of the war. Every branch's mission is important, and the Warrior Creed requires that "I will always place the mission first."

For the past three years we have seen increasing emphasis and more numerous resources placed on the basic skills needed for a combat deployment. It is our mission as Warrior Forge trainers to train cadets in the Warrior tasks and drills, and to certify to our higher commanders that every commissioned cadet who is liable to deploy is ready to deploy, ready take charge and ready to save lives as the mission requires. The call to deploy can come at any time, and with very short notice.

Leaders at all levels must take advantage of every opportunity to focus every training event on fundamental Warrior Tasks, and take full advantage of time and facilities that are available. We must prioritize individual training requirements and accomplish what is most important. There is probably insufficient time to train every cadet and every team on every task, so that they are completely proficient in executing the task under all conditions. Warrior Forge top priorities for training includes field craft, mission-essential crew drills, physical fitness, combat lifesaving skills, marksmanship, and most importantly, leader assessment and development.

We must train our cadets to perform all missions in a field environment under all conditions. Leaders must know the key factors of field craft. Leaders must be capable of demonstrating and enforcing those standards, so that our Soldiers will be as effective at the end of the operation as they are at the beginning, no matter what conditions they work under. Field training is tough, rigorous training. Tasks must be executed in field conditions in order to build confidence. If the cadet or team can perform the task on a dark, rainy night, in

MOPP 4, then they can probably perform it in combat.

Every team of cadets must master their critical combat drills. Whether your team is an infantry squad or an awards section in a personnel service battalion, every small team should have no more than five or six core tasks that all Soldiers know how to do instinctively and under all conditions.

Every cadet must become physically fit for combat. We must focus on the core physical capabilities that Soldiers must have to perform their mission under all conditions.

Every cadet should be a trained combat lifesaver. All cadets must be confident that they can keep their buddies alive using the equipment within the platoon, until higher echelon medics can arrive



Mercado

and evacuation can take place, regardless of how many combat lifesaver bags are in the team, section or platoon. Each cadet needs to be confident that if wounded, she or he will be kept alive by their buddy and that they can keep their buddies alive.

Every cadet must strive to become an expert marksman with their personal weapon. Cadets do not get to spend as much time at ranges, gunneries and on simulators as they would like to improve proficiency, but opportunity training can make all the difference. For instance, by putting a cadet with the weapon on the floor and using a tool as simple as a washer or dime, a sergeant can coach, reinforce and raise the standard of the most basic of marksmanship skills.

The Warrior Forge Team is doing an outstanding job assessing and developing future leaders for the challenges that come with deployment and war. It all comes down to reinforcing the basics: field craft, mission-essential crew drills, physical fitness, combat lifesaving skills and marksmanship.

Cadets, take the time to master these warfighter skills to the best of your abilities.



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